

TELEMEDICINE FOR THE MOBILE SOCIETY (TEMOS): A GLOBALLY ACTIVE COMPETENCE NETWORK FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF MEDICAL CARE OF TRAVELLING PEOPLE WORLDWIDE

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International travel is on the increase: Every year, more and more people visit foreign countries for private or business reasons. People prepare and organise their travel well and get good preventive advice from their physicians before starting their travel. However, there is a lack of information on where to go for good medical treatment in case of an emergency. On the other hand, insurance and assistance companies have to take care of their patients abroad and a decision, if and how treatment on the spot is possible often relies on unreliable information. An improvement of the information system as well as the treatment itself is crucial because the number of tourists who need medical treatment during their stay abroad is high.

The TEMOS project* consists of four subprojects: 1. The establishment of a globally active telemedicine competence network. 2. The establishment of a regularly updated information system about hospitals worldwide guaranteeing an adequate quality treatment for their patients. 3. The use of terrestrial connectivity (ISDN and Internet) and satellite communication for teleconsultation and second opinion services even for remote areas which cannot be reached by broadband networks. 4. The improvement and updating of the knowledge in preventive travel medicine via tele-education and eLearning.

The Institute of Aerospace Medicine at the University Hospital of Aachen, Germany, is the telemedical reference centre and TEMOS project leader. A South American sub-centre has been established in Brazil, a further sub-centre located in India is planned for the Asian region. The network started with hospitals from Greece, Turkey, India and Brazil and will be extended by other countries within the next months. TEMOS provides 2 communication platforms via ISDN, IP-based networks or satellite links on a point to point or multipoint basis. Hospital data provided by the participating network partners are stored and managed in the TEMOS database, access is restricted to special user groups on different levels. A regularly updated presentation of the member hospitals is published by the information system of the Centre for Travel Medicine (www.crm.de).

In summary, TEMOS is a telemedical consulting service combining different approaches of medical care by offering medical expertise, a regularly updated information system (TEMOS database) on hospitals abroad, advice by a renowned university hospital on a worldwide basis as well as teaching physicians and students by tele-teaching on novel developments in travel medicine.

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